

DEC 6 1971

DATE: November 30, 1971

TO : Jim Spuhler
Center for Advanced Studies

FROM : L. L. Cavalli-Sforza

SUBJECT:

I am sorry that I have not yet been able to see you since you arrived at Stanford, but as you might know, during the last month I have been bedridden with a cervical column condition. This does not, however, reduce to zero my activity and if you were prepared to make sometime a visit (more-or-less any time of the day and on short notice) to my home, I would certainly appreciate it.

I am not quite aware of what your plans for this year are, although I understand that they should center largely on the kind of problems in which Walter and I wrote an elementary sort of article in Scientific American some time ago. Although I can continue with a relatively satisfactory amount of activity in spite of spending most of my time in bed, I certainly am in the worst condition for doing any type of bibliographic research. Some problems about IQ and environment have been bothering me lately, and I wonder if by chance in your experience with the literature you can indicate to me some references on the following points which seem to me of the greatest importance. I know that there is something in the literature, but I am really interested to know if there is research which is of sufficient quality both from the point of view of the collection of the data and of the statistical analysis made to give rise to satisfactory solutions. The problems are to some extent difficult, one more than the others and I would like to have access to the best sources, if any.

The first point, perhaps the most difficult one, is the relationship between spacing of children and IQ. It is clear that it is not easy to separate this from overall fertility in terms of the total number of children, nor from socio-economic class. What I am really interested in is the time that the mother has to spend with the child, and the effect this has on the child's IQ. I would be especially interested in being able to see the effect of births following very closely one another, say one year or a little more, on the IQ of either of the child who was born first or of the child who was born last. It seems to me that amount of parental care has not been studied very extensively. Naturally, it is possible that rather than amount of parental care, it is the quality of parental care that counts, but this is probably even more difficult to study. It seems to me that this may be one of the most important environmental factors worth studying, and they could be studied in more than one racial group. It is likely also that parental care is greatly different because of cultural inheritance in different racial groups and may have substantial effects on IQ development.

If it is found that shorter spacing lowers IQ (other factors being equal), one could thus explain at least part of the lower IQ of twins, and the even lower one of triplets.

The second point is simpler. I would like to be convinced that it is true that the IQ of black children is relatively higher at the beginning of school and then tends to drop, while that of white children should remain constant. In particular, such data might mean that the schooling of black children is worse. This is a likely fact, but of course not easy to measure. Data of this kind would be especially interesting if they could come from schools that are really desegregated and where there is an approximately equal proportion of whites and blacks or in which, at least, the proportion is known. Naturally, if such data are taken from the population at large, they might mean anything.

Finally, in a letter to Scientific American -- I am enclosing a Xerox of it as you may find it amusing if you are not already familiar with it -- in which Shockley answered our article, he cited some evidence of the correlation between per cent black-white admixture and IQ. What references do you have on this?

If you have any information on these points, I would be grateful for references. If you happen to have a free half hour to spend here, I would certainly welcome that. I live very close to the Center at 736 Mayfield, and my home telephone number is 327-0227. Please give my best regards to all friends at the Center.

Yours sincerely,

Luca

L. L. Cavalli-Sforza

cc: Drs. Lindzey & Lederberg